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RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000764

NOFORN  
SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR A/S FRAZER, S/E WILLIAMSON, AF/C AND AF/SPG  
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND HUDSON  
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/18/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [UN](#) [AU](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: MINAWI SAYS KHALIL IBRAHIM STRONGER AFTER OMDURMAN  
ATTACK

REF: A. KHARTOUM 761

[B](#). KHARTOUM 760

[C](#). KHARTOUM 755

[D](#). KHARTOUM 741

[E](#). KHARTOUM 734

[F](#). KHARTOUM 724

Classified By: CDA Alberto M. Fernandez, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: JEM leader Khalil Ibrahim is stronger as a result of the attack on Omdurman, despite the short-term loss of fighters and vehicles, according to SLM leader and Senior Assistant to the President Minni Minawi. Minawi believes an attack on Chad is imminent, despite comments from other Sudanese Government sources to the contrary. Minawi reported continued detentions and abuses of Zaghawa in Omdurman and Khartoum. End summary.

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Aftermath of JEM Attack on Omdurman  
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[1](#)2. (C) Senior GNU Presidential Assistant and SLM leader Minni Minawi told poloffs in Juba on May 16 that JEM leader Khalil Ibrahim, who he said is undoubtedly in Chad, will likely emerge stronger as a result of the attack on Omdurman. The bold raid on Sudan's capital has inspired young Zaghawa in Darfur and will make it much easier for JEM to recruit fighters. Minawi said that his understanding is that JEM leader Khalil Ibrahim attacked Omdurman with at least 1,500 soldiers. Although as many as 300 JEM fighters may have been killed trying to take the Wadi Sayedna military base and inside Omdurman, and another 100 captured, Minawi predicted it will be easy to replace them. Contradicting reports that JEM is now weakened by their losses, Minawi said Khalil was well provisioned by Chadian President Deby following JEM's February 2008 defense of Ndjamena, receiving at least one hundred fifty vehicles in a single shipment. He said there is no doubt that Deby will continue to support JEM. Minawi disputed allegations that his own commanders and fighters had participated in the attack.

[1](#)3. (S/NF) Note: In a May 15 phone call with Poloff, Minawi explained that the SLM's largely Zaghawa force in Darfur was agitating for active military confrontation with the Sudanese Armed Force in the aftermath of the JEM attack. Ali Traio, a senior advisor to Minawi, later told Poloff on May 18 that SLM field commanders note that, until recently, JEM's military capacity was weak and question why the SLM, which possesses a great fighting ability, does not march on Khartoum given the apparent weakness in the regime's defense.

Traio said that SLM Chief Commander Jumah Hagar is trying to quiet these voices, but both he and Minawi need urgent delivery of the promised USG food assistance to strengthen their hand. End note.

14. (C) Minawi said that as a result of the JEM attack on Omdurman May 10, the Zaghawa community in Omdurman and Khartoum continues to be harassed by GOS security services. In addition to closing the Suq Libya (the &Libyan Market8 where many Zaghawa traders make a living in Omdurman) over 200 people have been detained for questioning, the majority of them Zaghawa. He said many of these people have been beaten severely during their detention. Minawi did not pass on any reports of summary executions. (Note: Minawi has ordered the creation of an SLM commission to track detentions and persecution following the JEM attack. Post will facilitate contact between this commission and UN Human Rights, which is monitoring developments regarding post-attack arrests and retribution, and will continue to press Government officials to ensure maximum access for the UN. End note.)

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Attack on Ndjamenana Likely but Expected to Fail  
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15. (C) Expressing supreme confidence in the military superiority of his own small but warlike Zaghawa tribe, Minawi thought an attack on Ndjamenana by Khartoum's Chadian proxies in the next few weeks is likely, but said it will fail without Zaghawa RFC leader Timane Erdimi. Minawi thought it unlikely that Erdimi will rejoin the Chadian rebel

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National Alliance for a second attack. The reason the February attack failed is because Erdimi backed out of the alliance at the last minute, and the offensive collapsed. Minawi said he has heard that National Intelligence and Security Service Director General Salah Ghosh is pushing hard for an immediate attack by the Chadian rebels on Ndjamenana (Note: CDA Fernandez warned NCP party chief Nafie and MFA U/S Mutriff Siddiq of just such an escalation on May 18 and 19, respectively).

16. (C) Asked if there had been any initiatives to create an inter-clan Zaghawa alliance, Minawi said that he himself is working on such a plan but did not divulge specifics. In the short term he still hopes to organize a conference on the Darfur Peace Agreement and how it could be expanded to include other rebel groups besides his own faction of the SLM.

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SPLM-SLM Dynamics  
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17. (C) Minawi expressed frustration that the SPLM continues to ignore him. Following the opening ceremony of the SPLM Convention, the SPLM did not provide him with transportation, nor was a room immediately available for him. He acknowledged that the SPLM has many other issues on its plate at the moment, but was nonetheless frustrated by the lack of attention, particularly by that of Presidential Affairs Minister Luka Biong Deng, who had seen him only once &and only briefly8 since his arrival in Juba. (Comment: SPLM officials were more aware of Minawi when he was meeting with poloffs, however, frequently coming over to pass greetings and provide him with Convention updates, appearing to belie Minawi's earlier lamentations of SPLM neglect. Moreover, subsequent to our meeting with him, GOSS President Kiir, Minister for Presidential Affairs Luka Biong Deng, and Minawi met May 18. Minawi told poloffs that he intends to depart to Darfur directly from Juba. End comment.)

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Comment  
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18. (C) We agree with Minawi's assessment that JEM may be stronger as a result of the May 10 attack on Omdurman, despite the short-term loss of fighters and vehicles. While many in the capital honestly rejected the attack and the political opposition has rallied around the regime, in Darfur, the bold raid has had the opposite effect. The ability to recruit inspired young Zaghawa to his movement is a tremendous advantage if the arrogant Khalil can capitalize on it as Zaghawa provide the overwhelming bulk of fighters in the Darfur conflict and their skill in raiding and navigating "by the moon" in the vast Sudanese desert garners respect and fear by the regime, including the notorious janjaweed. Minawi's assertion that Ghosh is pushing for an attack on Ndjamena contradicts what Presidential advisor Nafie told CDA May 18 (Ref B), and does not seem to be based on any special inside information from the regime, who rarely share anything of a sensitive nature with Minawi. It also contradicts what NISS Deputy Majok told the SPLM, that President Bashir might support a trip by FM Alor to Paris to persuade the French to lean on Chad to cut off support for JEM (Ref E).

FERNANDEZ